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Message Text

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ACTION INR-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 /030 W
----------210442Z 104969 /11
R 201535Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 722
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 4771

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINR IN GR GW
SUBJECT: FRG AMBASSADOR DIRK ONCKEN

REF: BONN A-137, APR 27, 1977

1. FRG AMBASSADOR DIRK ONCKEN, WHO HAS NOW DEPARTED ATHENS FOR HIS NEW POSITION IN INDIA, REPEATEDLY DEMONSTRATED TO US THAT HE IS BOTH HIGHLY PROFESSIONAL AND A MAN OF DEEPLY HELD AND WELL-FORMED VIEWS. HIS OVERWHELMING MOTIVATION HERE -- AND WE JUDGE IN THE PAST ELSEWHERE -- HAS BEEN TO SERVE GERMANY. AS HE SET ABOUT THAT SERVICE, A BASIC PREMISE HAS BEEN THE IMPORTANCE OF THE US-GERMAN RELATIONSHIP AND, ITS COROLLARY, THAT IT IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL TO THE FRG TO HAVE CLOSE AND EFFECTIVE RELATIONS WITH THE US. TO HIM ALL OTHER GERMAN RELATIONS ARE LESS IMPORTANT THAN THE ONE BETWEEN BONN AND WASHINGTON. THUS, THIS EMBASSY ALWAYS FOUND HIM READY TO COOPERATE AND SUPPORT OUR MUTUAL GOALS HERE. AND ON TAKING LEAVE OF AMBASSADOR KUBISCH HE ASKED THAT OUR EMBASSY IN NEW DELHI BE MADE AWARE THAT IT SHOULD NOT FAIL TO CALL UPON HIM AND HIS EMBASSY FOR WHATEVER STRENGTHS, ASSISTANCE AND COOPERATION THE FRG COULD OFFER.

2. AS THAT REMARK SUGGESTS, ONCKEN IS EXTREMELY FORTH-
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RIGHT. HE IS ALSO A MAN WHO HAS THE COURAGE OF HIS CON-
VICTIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, IN GREECE HE MADE CEREMONIAL VISITS TO GERMAN MILITARY CEMETERIES WHERE THE BODIES OF GERMANS WHO FELL DURING THE NAZI INVASION AND OCCUPATION OF THIS COUNTRY ARE BURIED. ONCKEN DISMISSED THE QUALMS OF THOSE IN HIS EMBASSY WHO COUNSELED AGAINST HIS MAKING SUCH VISITS, DECLARING "THEY WERE MY COMRADES." (ONCKEN HIMSELF

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LOST ALL BUT THE STUBS OF THREE OF HIS RIGHT HAND FINGERS
WHEN HE WAS WOUNDED IN WORLD WAR II.) AND EVEN IN THE
DARKEST DAYS OF ANTI AMERICANISM IN GREECE, ONCKEN WOULD SPEAK
OUT TO GREEK OFFICIALS AND OTHERS ABOUT THE "GREAT DEBT"
ALL NATIONS OF WESTERN EUROPE OWE
TO THE UNITED STATES "WHICH CAN NEVER BE
REPAID."

3. ONCKEN'S POLITICAL VIEWS ARE QUITE CONSERVATIVE. AND
AMONG HIS FRIENDS AND CONTACTS HERE, THIS SECTOR IS WELL
REPRESENTD. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS A REFLECTION OF HIS SKILLS
--AND HIS HARD WORK-- THAT HE ALSO HAS WARM FRIENDS AND A
GREAT DEAL OF RESPECT AMONG NON-COMMUNIST LEBERALS, WHO
RECALL HIS EFFORTS ON THEIR BEHALF DURING THE YEARS OF THE
GREEK MILITARY JUNTA.

4. TALL, SLIM AND EXTREMELY BLOND, ONCKEN'S ERECT
CARRIAGE ELOQUENTLY EXPRESSES BOTH THE FIRMNESS OF HIS
CONVICTIONS AND HIS LIMITED SENSE OF HUMOR.

5. ONCKEN HAS ONE CHILD FROM HIS SECOND MARRIAGE, A YOUNG BOY.
KUBISCH

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